



February 9, 2005

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

VIA FACSIMILE AND U.S. MAIL

Dear Senator Cornyn:

On behalf of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), I am writing to congratulate you on the introduction of the "Open Government Act." Since the organization was founded in 1922, ASNE's membership of directing editors of daily newspapers throughout the United States has worked to assist journalists and provide an unfettered and effective press in the service of the American people.

ASNE is proud to endorse the Open Government Act as legislation that can help us achieve these ideals. As you wrote in your recent article in the LBJ Journal of Public Affairs, "Our national commitment to democracy and freedom is not merely some abstract notion. It is a very real and continuing effort, and an essential element of that effort is an open and accessible government." The Open Government Act is a ringing reminder that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the cornerstone of this principle. Your bill comes at a time when many executive agencies are able to shortcut FOIA's guarantees of access to government documents while avoiding any repercussion for their actions.

We appreciate your desire to provide a meaningful enforcement mechanism for those who see that FOIA is not achieving its promise of open and accessible records for all. The bill's pragmatic focus on procedural, rather than substantive, change is noteworthy; instead of rewriting the law in a way that would promote or disfavor certain special interests, you wisely seek to bring government and citizenry together to make FOIA more efficient and effective.

ASNE applauds your efforts and joins you in urging passage of this bill in the 109th Congress.

Sincerely,

Karla Garrett Harshaw
President

Karla Garrett Harshaw
Springfield (Ohio) News-Sun
Cox Community Newspapers
President

Rick Rodriguez
The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee
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